

Capital Reading

Brothers of Assorted Sizes Are Kibitzing on Our Lives

By Glendy Culligan

THE NAKED SOCIETY. By Vance Packard. McKay. 369 pp. \$3.95.
THE PRIVACY INVADERS. By Myron Brenton. Coward-McCann. 237 pp. \$4.95.

WHEN GEORGE ORWELL PROJECTED a totalitarian nightmare into our future with his novel "1984," he created the slogan "Big brother is watching you" as the most horrendous symptom of a people's loss of freedom. Yet today, 20 years before Orwell's prophetic deadline, a great many brothers big and small are watching everyone of us, despite our illusion that democracy guarantees privacy to its citizens. Independently conceived, these two books are similar in aim and treatment. Their theme is the encroachment on individuals of a society that paradoxically proclaims itself free, yet leaves few people free from supervision. Both books document—often with identical material—the areas in which privacy is invaded and the instruments by which it is invaded. As descriptive accounts, both are well organized, instructive and alarming, with Packard holding a slight edge in scope and detail, while Brenton achieves a more lively style.

Privacy is a more complex right than other civil liberties because the concept is neither defined nor guaranteed by our Constitution; while violations are devious and in some cases intangible.

Only 22 states specifically uphold the right of privacy by statute or judicial decision. Some forms of privacy are, of course, implicitly protected by the Bill of Rights and by the Fourth

and Fifth Amendments, but the most insidious violations today are effected by means that the Founding Fathers could not have anticipated.

Even Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis, who formulated our present legal concept of privacy in the Harvard Law Review of 1890, were unable to foresee the multiple forms of harassment which now beset us.

These, as itemized by both authors, include widespread use of classic detective methods for routine business purposes; an incredible array of electronic devices used in industrial as well as criminal surveillance; mushrooming of tests that violate the privacy of self, both for academic and industrial placement; a vast network of personal dossiers accumulated by credit and insurance agencies; often now stored in electronic memory banks; extended use of the highly questionable polygraph technique for ascertaining truth; sale and exchange of "mailing lists" intrusive surreptitious surveillance by groups.

In addition, Packard considers not only a violation of privacy, but examples of "massive" intrusion of thought in the classroom.

According to the evidence, the number of people who have a little list on which you may find yourself is truly astonishing. Collective files of the Associated Credit Agencies of

America contain dossiers, often intimate ones, on 120 million consumers. The smaller Retail Credit Co. has wisely shopped the personal habits of 42 million shoppers. The Bureau of Investigation's supercomputer scans \$30 million a year looking into peoples' pasts. The privately sponsored, ultraconservative American Security Council boasts a list of more than a million alleged subversives.

And so on, ad infinitum and ad nauseam. The prospect of so much control, espionage, and spying is pleasing to any self-reporting individual, or to any citizen concerned with the shape of his society.

Yet, in their zeal to expose abuses and thereby stimulate sales, neither of these authors considers seriously the moral and legal problems that exploiting societies must face.

"The right to be let alone is indeed the securing of all freedom," Justice Brandeis is quoted in one book as saying. Unfortunately, one then remembers that the end of all freedom is surveillance.

Anthropologists tell us that every society chooses between internalized controls and external controls. The maintenance of order by the community is an ill that we hope to banish by electronic eye, but we have not found anything else that works as well. Historically, that some thing else has kept the human race from the

Ikabana Show Opens at Center

More than 200 Japanese flower arrangements will be seen at the National Housing Center, when the Ikabana show will be on view for six days beginning April 2.

A large Japanese garden with a little bridge will provide a focal point for the entire show. The exhibit is arranged by area women who learned the Ikabana art in Japan.

Admission is free. The Housing Center, 1625 E. St. n.w., is open daily.



Miss Culligan

Greek chorus, the small town gossip, and the effective in rapidly changing societies here to our taste.

Today, like every man in the sparrow, but in reverse, segments of the nation, the sparrow seems his fate, unaware of that survival. Consequently, and until evolution deplores mankind of some of its most troublesome traits, we shall have to render some accounting for our behavior. Throughout history, small elite groups have ever considered the mass system safe.

Honor would certainly be a pleasant alternative to espionage, but it requires a lot of time, exercise, the muscles of self restraint, an aid to either form or control, our law should be refined to meet the challenges of technology, and these books usefully define the need. They far too remind us, however, that the long run only a whole sale retooling of the individual conscience can make big brother machines obsolete.

Burton Quotes Bard: 'No More'

We will have no more marriages. Hamlet, III, i, 156-157.

TORONTO, April 1.

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SIHANOUK SPEAKS

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